

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-15 and 17-21 without prejudice or dedication.

1. (cancelled)
2. (cancelled)
3. (cancelled)
4. (cancelled)
5. (cancelled)
6. (cancelled)
7. (cancelled)
8. (cancelled)
9. (cancelled)
10. (cancelled)
11. (cancelled)
12. (cancelled)
13. (cancelled)
14. (cancelled)
15. (cancelled)

16. (currently amended) A method, performed at a requesting client device and an object server device coupled to the client device~~coupled to a server~~, for maintaining a copy of an object

associated with an item of information, the item of information being accessed by other client devices coupled to the server device, the object including a data structure storing the item of information, the method including the steps of:

forwarding a modification request from the requesting client device to the  
coupled object server device, the modification request for modifying at least one  
attribute of the object associated with the item of information, wherein the at least  
one attribute is one of a plurality of attributes of the object apportioned into  
general entries and variable entries, the general entries including a list of member  
client devices having access to the object and participating in a persistent real-  
time conferencing session represented by the object, and the variable entries  
including a plurality of items of persistent information associated with the object,  
wherein the general entries are defined by the object server device, and the  
variable entries of the object data structure are defined and managed by any of the  
member client devices having access to the object;

receiving, at the object server device, the modification request from the  
requesting client device;

determining whether the requesting client device is authorized to modify  
the at least one attribute of the object associated with the item of information by  
determining if the requesting client device is contained within the list of member  
client devices;

in the event that the requesting client device is not within the list of  
member client devices, sending an indication that the modification request was  
not granted to the client device;

in the event that the client device is indicated in the list of member client devices, the object server device modifying the object in accordance with the modification request, sending a response package to the requesting client device including a copy of the modified object, broadcasting a notification package to a first subset of the member client devices listed in the list of member client devices that are also currently connected to the object server to share data and collaborate in real-time, and not broadcasting said notification package to a second subset of the member client devices listed in the list of member client devices that are not also currently connected to the object server to share data and collaborate in real-time;

receiving, at the requesting client device in the response package from the object server device, the an updated copy of the modified at least a portion of the object, the updated copy of the modified at least a portion of the object reflecting the requested modification; and

replacing ~~a corresponding portion of~~ the object at the requesting client device with the updated copy.

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)